

Strengthening families and rebuilding our economy is a top priority for this Congress as we work with President Obama to put our country back on the path to recovery. Our goal is to bring common sense reform and consumer protections to our financial system and rein in the waste, fraud and abuse in federal spending.

This week, we passed key military procurement reform legislation that will save taxpayers billions of dollars each year, while ensuring the safety and security of the American people with the most advanced weapons system in the world. The emergency supplemental bill to meet the needs of our troops in Afghanistan and Iraq, as well as increase resources to combat pandemic flu, was also approved. The House also passed the *21st Century Green High-Performing Public School Facilities Act* that invests in our schools and help prepare our children for the jobs of the future.

Next week we will recognize the tremendous contributions of entrepreneurs and small enterprises during National Small Business Week. As our economy begins to shift out of recession, small businesses will once again lead the way.

I continue to fight for Minnesotans everyday and encourage you to contact m in Washington, DC or St. Paul office if I can be of service.

Sincerely,



Congresswoman Betty McCollum
Serving Minnesota's Fourth Congressional District

McCollum Supports 21st Century Green Schools

On Thursday, the House passed the *21st Century Green High-Performing Public School Facilities Act* (H.R. 2187), which invests in our schools to boost our economy now and help prepare our children for the jobs of the future and builds on the efforts of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. The measure will boost student achievement, enhance teachers' effectiveness, generate savings for schools and create clean energy jobs.

According to calculations by the Economic Policy Institute, this legislation's construction funding would support as many as 136,000 new construction jobs - many in areas that will give our workers the valuable skills they need to excel in a clean energy economy.

Upgrading school buildings to make them more energy efficient and more reliant on renewable sources of energy will lower costs to taxpayers, help reduce pollution and transition us to a clean American energy economy.

School buildings should be safe and healthy learning environments for our children. The quality of a school isn't just important for children's health - it's critical for their learning. But, according to recent estimates, America's schools are hundreds of billions of dollars short of the funding needed to bring them up to good condition.

McCollum Announces Winners of the 2009 Congressional Art Competition



Congresswoman McCollum congratulates 1st place winner JiHye Baek of Concordia Academy

The 1st place winner will receive three free round-trip tickets to Washington DC for the exhibition opening from Southwest Airlines and a scholarship from the College of Visual Arts in St. Paul.

1st Place:

JiHye Baek, 12th grade, Concordia Academy (Roseville)

2nd Place:

Zachary Wilkowski, 11th grade, Twin Cities Academy High School (St. Paul)

3rd Place:

Hannah Frudden, 11th grade, Mounds Park Academy (St. Paul)

McCollum Votes for Supplemental Bill that Recognizes Sacrifices of U.S. Troops



There are about 2.3 million men and women serving in the U.S. Armed Forces, active and reserve. Those service members and their families have been asked to bear the brunt of the war. Since 2001, nearly 5,000 of them have lost their lives in Iraq and Afghanistan and over 33,000 have been wounded.

The 2009 Supplemental Appropriations bill the House passed this week recognizes the sacrifices of our troops, and the hardships military families face, by continuing to invest in improving military healthcare and family services.

The legislation honors the commitment and sacrifice of our men and women in uniform by providing the 170,000 service members who have had their enlistments involuntarily extended since September 11, 2001 with \$500 per month for every month they were held under stop-loss orders.

The bill also provides for President Obama's plan to end combat operations in Iraq, refocusing the fight against terrorism in Afghanistan, and better preparing us for pandemic flu.

McCollum Special Alert: Veterans Should Immediately Sign Up for the New GI Bill

As of May 2009, Post -9/11 Veterans can begin signing up for the new GI Bill for the 21st Century Congress enacted last year.

The Department of Veterans Affairs is now accepting and processing applications for the Post-9/11 GI Bill. Veterans can complete and submit the application form available online and will receive a letter explaining VA's decision regarding your eligibility for the program.

The application form requires that individuals currently eligible for benefits under the Montgomery GI BILL-Active Duty (MGIB-AD), Montgomery GI Bill-Selected Reserve (MGIB-SR) or the Reserve Educational Assistance Program (REAP) make an irrevocable election from their existing program to the Post-9/11 GI Bill.

To apply today, go to: <http://www.gibill.va.gov/>

McCollum Speaks Out About the Future Status of the Twin Cities Army Ammunition Plant (TCAAP)

"For eight years my office has worked with Arden Hills, the U.S. Army, and the General Services Administration, to get the pollution at TCAAP cleaned-up and all 585 acres of excess federal land put back into productive use. Over the past weeks, I have been personally involved in facilitating discussions between local and federal parties to help make the city's vision of a mixed use development a reality. Now that Arden Hills will no longer be pursuing a negotiated sale with the Army, it is time to explore all remaining realistic options for use, along with the costs and resources available for achieving an ultimate end use. Since the disposal of this contaminated federal land will impact Arden Hills, as well as surrounding communities, I would encourage a broad discussion of potential usage options that would provide the greatest benefit to residents of Arden Hill, Ramsey County, and the entire metropolitan area," Congresswoman McCollum said.

[Click here to read entire statement](#)

McCollum Works in Congress to Protect & Preserve Native American Languages



Congresswoman McCollum speaks out about the urgent need to protect and preserve Native American languages during the National Alliance to Save Native Languages' Annual Summit

McCollum Highlights National Small Business Week (May 18-22)



Next week is National Small Business Week!

Small businesses are the backbone of the American economy. They create 60 to 80 percent of new jobs. Congress and the Obama Administration have made small business needs a priority. The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act is expected to generate \$21 billion in new lending and investment for entrepreneurs.

The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 Access to Credit and Capital

The America's Recovery Capital (ARC) loan program was created by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act to provide small businesses with temporary financial relief. Through the program, viable small businesses can receive no-interest loans up to \$35,000, backed 100% by the Small Business Administration. Repayment does not begin for a full year and businesses will have up to 5 years to repay the loan.

Small businesses will be able to use the proceeds of an ARC loan to pay virtually any existing debt. In this way, viable business concerns will be able to overcome temporary financial difficulties and keep their doors open. These loans allow entrepreneurs to fulfill their financial obligations and retain employees.

ARC loans are designed to help viable small businesses, which the SBA has defined as firms that have a demonstrated earnings history and a proven record of success, but need a little help to get through a short-term downturn.

The SBA provides additional information at

http://www.sba.gov/idc/groups/public/documents/sba_homepage/recovery_act_overview_033009.pdf